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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
INFO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

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DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR EUR/PRA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/24/2017  
TAGS: [PARM](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#) [RU](#) [SY](#) [EUN](#)  
SUBJECT: RUSSIAN ARMS TRANSFERS TO IRAN AND SYRIA: EU  
REACTION TO NON-PAPER

REF: A. SECSTATE 146794  
[B](#). BRUSSELS 3121  
[C](#). BRUSSELS 3081

Classified By: Laurence Wohlers, Political Minister Counselor, for reasons 1.5(d) and (e)

THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST. PLEASE SEE PARAGRAPH 3.

1.(S) Per REF A instructions, USEU DCM Murray met with Helga Schmid, Director of the Policy Unit of the Council Secretariat on October 24 to deliver our non-paper on Russian

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Arms Transfers to Iran and Syria. DCM outlined U.S. concerns and requested that EU High Rep Solana's intervention on the issue at the October 26 EU-Russia summit could be helpful. Schmid assured DCM that the EU shared U.S. concerns and undertook to convey the information to High Representative Solana immediately. She stated that Solana would have the opportunity to raise the matter in a bilateral meeting with President Putin at the summit in Mafra, Portugal. Moreover, Schmid remarked that she had raised the issue repeatedly with Russian counterparts, including separately with the Russian Ambassador to the EU Chizhov and the Russian MFA Political Director -- both times in the context of Syria. Israel had also made its concerns about Russian arms transfers to Syria known to the Council Secretariat.

2.(S) Schmid confirmed that she would travel to Beirut and Damascus in mid-November in order to assess the prospects for cooperation on a new border security mission for Lebanon and Syria. Her assessment was intended to help the Council determine whether to follow up on Spanish FM Moratinos' proposal for a new border mission. She confided that she was under heavy pressure from the Spanish and the Portuguese EU Presidency to recommend that a fact-finding mission be deployed. However, Schmid readily acknowledged the challenges of any such border mission. First, the Lebanese government remained critical of the plan. In addition, there were several problems inherent in the Moratinos plan, including lack of full EU control along a 400 plus km border, the potential for Syria to use such a mission to "blame" the EU for any incidents on the border, and the safeguarding of sensitive monitoring equipment. In any case, Schmid said she would deliver a three-part message to Damascus: 1) be a constructive partner in Iraq; 2) stop supporting Hezbollah and Hamas; and 3) stop interfering in Lebanon.

3.(S) DCM took the opportunity to solicit Schmid's understanding of the problem of "foreign fighters" transiting

through Syria to Iraq. Schmid expressed interest in pursuing the issue with Syrian counterparts during her trip to Damascus and requested more information on the subject. She observed that Syrian cooperation in the matter could be a significant "win-win" in the short-term for both Damascus and the West. ACTION REQUEST: Post requests Department provide talking points as well as appropriate background information on this subject, in accordance with the U.S.-EU classified information sharing agreement. END ACTION REQUEST  
GRAY

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